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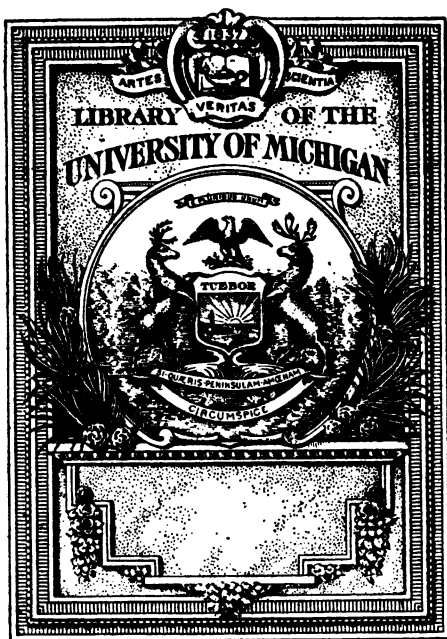
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Received
March 11, 1912.

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THE IRISH PROBLEM

AS VIEWED BY

A CITIZEN OF THE EMPIRE.

‘Paul said, But I was free born.’—*Acts*, xxii. 28.

LONDON :
HATCHARDS, PICCADILLY.

1887.

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Western Univ.
Lond, Ont.
ex.
6-30-1922
ex-filt.

4-14-27. EHW.
4-5-33
AVM

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ERRATA.

- P. 13, l. 9, for "Wininpeg" *read* Winnipeg.
P. 52, l. 11, for "settlers" *read* settlers.
P. 75, l. 22, for "venial" *read* venal.
P. 105, l. 18, for "commonalties" *read* communities.
P. 114 (note), for "seems" *read* seem.
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THE PROBLEM OF IRELAND.

I.

THE determination now to be made of the future status of Ireland must give rise to tendencies in all the molecules composing the Imperial body. Mr. Reid, the author of *Why I am a Liberal*, in his later pamphlet, on Home Rule, attacks the very term, 'the Empire.' He would convert the existing legal conception of a vast people, united by a common allegiance to their Crown, into the conception of a series of voluntary alliances—a sort of partnership at will—between a number of

independent nations, of which the new Irish nation would be the type.

Mr. Reid's contention, therefore, serves the very useful purpose of calling attention to the fact that, in facing the proposals regarding Ireland, England stands at the parting of two roads. She has to decide once for all what shall be henceforth the legalised theory of the world-wide British State. Shall the new theory of local nationalities become established ? Or shall the existing Constitutional theory of a United Empire be—not barely conserved—but made the aim of further constitutional development and held up as the object of patriotic sentiment ?

Let a Canadian, above all, be heard to protest against the entirely fallacious assumption that the case of Canada is an illustration that patriotism is a sentiment that can be duplicated. The question of local autonomy in Canada has never in-

volved a thought of that question—of a local as against an Imperial national allegiance. Local control of legislation and administration was demanded, and was granted, on the ground of practical expediency alone. The Irish proposals of Mr. Gladstone, and the arguments used in their favour, have, for the first time, raised the broader issue. The decision of that case will form the first precedent; and as a precedent it must prove all-important in determining in which direction the current of Imperial policy is to be directed.

✓ The Mayor of an Irish town has lately distinguished himself by declining to take part in the Jubilee services at Westminster, on the ground that the Royal Lady in whose honour he was invited was a 'foreign' Sovereign. By resolution of the Council the terms of the reply have been perpetuated upon the minutes of the

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5r.00
Corporation. (One would have thought that, even if they had forgotten their loyalty, the countrymen of Edmund Burke would have remembered something of their chivalry.) At the same time, the entry as it stands embodies a statement as contrary to legal fact as it is to good taste. We might hope for a day when that Limerick Dogberry, reflecting on the record, would wish within himself that he had not thus caused himself to be written down. To suppose that an established Constitution can be altered merely by denying its existence, surely is very like talking twaddle.

But the effect of carrying out Mr. Gladstone's scheme, according to the principles upon which it has been advocated, would be to reverse the existing conditions; it would immediately shift that *onus* which established Constitutional forms and education impose

upon the minds of the respectable and law-abiding classes in every country. Hitherto the allegiance and the sympathy of those classes, both in Ireland and elsewhere,—in the kingdoms, in the provinces and possessions,—has been on the side of the Empire ; consequently, to this moment it cannot be truly said that there is a question between Ireland as a nation on one side and the British Government on the other side.

But should the Home Rule measure be enacted, the sentiment which to-day is merely the utterance of a boor would in its course become the sentiment lawfully entertained by the worth, loyalty, and intelligence of the land. Future generations would be brought up in Ireland under a law and constitution which legalised the idea of an Irish nationality, and relegated the Imperial connexion to the position of a compulsory foreign alliance.

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How can there be more than one real allegiance, whether in law or in sentiment? Must it not be to the primary and not to the secondary object, to the acknowledged country rather than to the distant fiction of a supreme Government, that the loyalty of educated men, as well as of the masses, will in future attach itself? As it did in Virginia at the time of the War of Secession, so must it do in Ireland; and so must it do, *à fortiori*, in the distant Colonies and in the great possessions of the Empire. When the new idea in its course reaches India, is it not too likely to result in a scene of tragedy and disaster, on a scale unexampled in modern history?

Since it is so eminently an occasion for remembering the maxim, '*C'est le premier pas qui coûte*,' the responsibility of English statesmen in this hour, is, in a sense, not limited to their insular constituency. The possibilities of a great future are

at their mercy. The course of Parliament is being watched with the intensity of personal interest by the inhabitants of colonies and possessions in all parts of the world; not to speak of those other millions of our race who, although not subjects of the same Crown, are Englishmen in fact: having (occasional superficial jealousies apart) a kindred interest in the honour of the English name and in the credit of English Parliamentary institutions. Part of the stake dependent upon the present contest is that kind of modern *hegemonia*, that historic moral headship of the world-wide English race which has continued with Great Britain, in virtue of her ancient right, and of her hitherto well-maintained position in the forefront of the world's affairs. Precious, although intangible, is that possession. Its forfeiture would involve a loss, not to England only, but to the prestige of

the English nations generally. 'When the head suffers, all suffer.' That possession a vacillating Parliament, bending to every wind of opinion at home or abroad, a feeble Government, seeking only to prop itself by time-serving expedients, might now imperil irrecoverably.

By confession of its advocates Home Rule would be another leap in the dark. Has not English policy gone far enough in that direction ? Is there anywhere in the world a national estate so great or prosperous that it would not finally be dissipated and brought to ruin by such a process of management ?

There is a point at which conciliation loses its effect. An irrevocable blunder of policy would not be made more respectable in consequence of having been perpetrated without reflection under the influence of a gush of sentiment.

The present Parliament, in refusing to

subordinate its legislative and executive functions, either to a government of misrule in Ireland or to a government of public meetings in England, seems to have taken the only course worthy of statesmanship. Sentiment is an element of which statesmanship must take account, but to which it does not yield itself blindly. Concessions to it not allowed by wisdom must fail to win respect in any quarter. Genuine American opinion would in no wise be flattered by such a spectacle. For the strength and credit of the nation, both at home and abroad, the times now seem to demand above all things the display of statesmanlike forethought and of firm and vigorous government.

To strengthen the hands of a faithful Government in such times seems to be the duty, not merely of local parties or of local constituencies, but of every patriotic subject of the Crown.

A new thing is being seen in the world; in those stirrings of an Imperial patriotism now manifestly being felt throughout the Queen's dominions. That Colonists of English birth should have carried with them, and preserved during their lifetime, the allegiance of their nativity, was not a subject of wonder. But the founders of those distant communities could not be sponsors for the sentiments of their children. New generations, in a great measure native to the soil, have arisen, to occupy the land. The loyalty which was an inborn affection in the fathers is for the latter generation a tradition, a mere abstraction. Remoteness of situation has made self-government a necessity. Diversities of interest tend to give rise to independence of feeling. That, nevertheless, in all those peoples the centrifugal tendency should appear to be arresting itself; that from such distances and out of such diversities

an aspiration towards a United Empire should have grown up, is a phenomenon, not merely unprecedented, but almost beyond expectation.

But in every part the young sentiment has still to struggle for existence against counter-influences. It is but a frail and delicate birth : it may yet be wounded or even chilled to death ; or it may be encouraged and nurtured into complete and enduring vigour. The being of a sentiment cannot be maintained upon mere official constitutions and occasional diplomatic conferences. The sense of an identity of moral and political, if not of material interests, must be fostered, if we would convert Imperial unity into a reality. That indispensable mutuality of feeling cannot be kept alive unless a constant consultation and an intimate interchange of opinion upon the public affairs of the Empire, as upon topics of common concern, becomes

established as a habit. The time is past for resting upon the ancient boast of the British drum-beat that every morning encompasses the globe. The ideal of a merely military Empire upon which the sun never sets is a lifeless ideal. The hour has struck for it to awake to a real, conscious life. Opinion is the living force of modern communities. Public opinion rough-hews the policy of the nation ; Cabinets and Parliaments merely give it final shape. Who shall prescribe the limits from which public opinion shall assert itself? Materialists have asserted that thought and electricity are identical : at least one is the natural vehicle of the other. Hence the necessity of a modern Empire has also become a possibility. The daily drum-beat—the symbol of military power—may yet be followed in its round by currents of thought, by a circulation of political opinion, sending its sustaining

pulses constantly throughout the mighty organism.

A truly Imperial press is still a dream of the future. There exists not now any one great news corporation publishing its edition (weekly or semi-weekly) on the same day in London, in Edinburgh, and in Dublin ; in Toronto, in Montreal, in Halifax, and in Wininpeg ; in the Australasian capitals, and in the great centres of India. By a sufficiently liberal use of telegraphic facilities, a faithful mirror, not only of local events but of local opinion, might be held up to all parts of the Empire simultaneously. Each part would hear every other speaking as it were with its own voice. The opportunity would be likely to develop a college of writers habituated to treating all matters with the same large-minded patriotism ; all, in their several localities, maintaining against the tendencies to provincialism the savour of a

more ennobling enthusiasm. Such an institution, were it in existence, might put a new face upon the prospects of a United Empire: it would throw a bridge across the mere geographical interspaces.*

In the meantime Imperial citizenship need not be an empty phrase. Since a bridge does not exist, we must be content to make use of stepping-stones.

Such considerations embolden the pen of the present writer. Although neither a native nor a resident of these islands, he is one of those unnumbered thousands throughout the Colonies who are moved with the sentiment of Imperial patriotism, and with a desire at the present crisis to give proof of their sense of citizenship in the Empire.

Asserting the privilege and seeking to

* The project may be found to be not so unfeasible as at a first glance it might appear. The writer may recur to the subject in a future paper.

perform a duty of the citizenship he claims, the writer presumes to take part in a discussion which, although of local origin, opens a prospect of consequences of Imperial moment.

A voice from the Colonies seeks to be heard by the public in whose hands the disposition of the great issue rests; that is to say, by the Irish, the Scotch, and the English people. Does not justice seem to require that a hearing should be accorded?

Opinions formed at a distance from the scene of a controversy must necessarily be presented with diffidence; yet in a juncture like the present an almost counterbalancing advantage may be felt to attach to views proceeding from such a source: the standpoint being that of an observer who, without being indifferent to the issue, is independent of many local prejudices of education, of interest, and of party passion. A remote station sometimes offers a more

comprehensive prospect of a movement than is obtained by any of the immediate combatants. The perspective in which men and events are seen is more like that of history.

If the British public is in earnest in desiring a substantial unity of the Empire it will welcome, even with a certain indulgence, an effort of Colonial thought to make itself heard at this juncture on a matter so truly of Imperial concern.

By the very manner in which it is received, the attempt itself may become a test of the prospects of an Imperial as distinguished from a merely local public spirit—of an Imperial citizenship as distinguished from local patriotism.

Sentiment so far enters into the subject, that I may be allowed a somewhat romantic simile:—comparing the present venture to that of the Hindoos, questioning the future by the fate of a lamp

committed at night to the surface of the Ganges.

Out of a like obscurity an unknown writer (confident only of the existence of the sentiment he addresses) sends forth this leaflet to the public of this great Empire. Puny adventure for so mighty a stream—shall it be extinguished in a moment? Or is it fated to be borne awhile into the distance—a tiny spark, yet exhibiting to the eyes of those that watch it the direction of the deep but favouring current?

II.

THE picture drawn by the English supporters of Home Rule of the condition of the Irish Question represents it as a kind of Chat Moss lying in the way of Imperial Parliamentary progress,—a dark, unfathomable bog, into which whatever legislative materials are thrown are, in a short time, swallowed up without leaving any visible result. ‘Coercion’ has been tried; Concession has been tried,—one, apparently, as vainly as the other. The present Home Rule proposition is not so much a final effort at overcoming the difficulty as it is a declaration of despair on the part of those who urge it.

Even the advocates of that course are not unconscious that grave consequences may flow from the revolution they are seek-

ing to accomplish. It is purely as a *dernier ressort* that they commit themselves to the proposition. The very lightness of heart they profess since abandoning themselves to the new policy is not unparalleled. A like feeling of relief probably visits the overburdened tradesman when he ceases his struggle with inextricable difficulties, and lays down his burden at the doors of the Bankruptcy Court.

Fortunately for England at this juncture, the lottery of a general election has issued in a Parliament answering, I believe, to the desire of the people and to the need of the times.

The majority has not surrendered to the temptation to adopt an easy but inglorious solution. It still offers a firm resistance to those pessimistic persuasions; although the alternative prospect is long, dismal, and laborious, and the country may be said to be holding its decision in reserve.

The first step towards clearness in debate is an accurate definition of the subject-matter of the issue.

Home Rule has been offered as a universal remedy for what is really a highly complicated series of disorders. Into the composition of what is called the Irish Question enter three distinct questions or problems. There is a practical or agrarian problem, there is the question of political or constitutional reform, and there is a sentimental question.

Universal remedies are always open to suspicion. By studying each complaint separately, we may hope to find the series of remedies most specifically appropriate, and therefore least violent on the whole.

The writer will submit some suggestions as to a mode in which what is substantial in Irish agrarian grievances may, he believes, be remediable, without recourse to the political revolution proposed by Mr.

Gladstone, or to any perilous departure from economical principles. Secondly, he will submit some reflections regarding the causes of the universally recognised inefficiency of Parliaments as deliberative and legislative agencies, and as to the means which offer, independently of any experimental constitutional legislation, of overcoming those defects; defects which have formed an additional foundation for just complaint from Ireland. Should the practical causes of complaint but be removed, the sentimental element in the Irish question, that residuum of discontent which springs from wounded race or local feeling, is more likely to yield in time to appropriate influences.

The practical sense of the majority of the British people has led them to direct their attention first to the tangible and substantial grievance calling most pressingly for immediate reform.

Ireland, in the opinion of the present Parliament, is afflicted with an economical disorder, aggravated by political rhetoric. Mr. Gladstone himself has given some signs of an unconscious tendency to revert to the same conclusion, which was once his own.

In his speech on the 17th of March last, reviewing the whole question, he practically fell back upon the unsatisfactory state of the land tenure in Ireland as the thing to be remedied ; reiterating his plan of Home Rule chiefly as being a means to that end. The substance of his argument for a separate Irish Government, as he now presents it, is that, when instituted, that Government would become a body upon whose responsibility advances might be made from the Imperial Exchequer for the purpose of assisting the Irish leaseholders to become the owners of their farms. In other words, it would

constitute a kind of National Guarantee Corporation.

The object ultimately aimed at may be admitted to be a good one. That the freehold interest of the country should continue to be concentrated in the possession of a trifling minority of the nation is (particularly since the enfranchisement of the excluded majority) a condition of things which, whether it is or is not economically disadvantageous, certainly is politically dangerous. The land, which is, in every country, the basis of credit, the chief repository or means of investment of accumulations, and the leading incitement to thrift, ceases, when it becomes an extremely limited monopoly, to exhibit these qualities to the eyes of the people. Public and private credit, property, and social security, in such a country may be described as standing, not on a base, but on an apex. Theories,

of which that of Henry George is but a type, are constantly threatening a society so posed. On the other hand, in the American Republic, and in equally Republican Canada, those ideas have been received with derision, simply for the reason that in those countries (outside the proletariat of a few great cities) almost every man has an interest, or some expectation of acquiring an interest, in the freehold of land. There the proposed social revolution, if it would benefit the few, would do so by disturbing the many.

If in these islands the converse existing conditions give rise to a disadvantage and to a danger, the effect like the cause is not confined to Ireland. The kingdoms together are interested in the search for a proper and for a general remedy. At the same time, a wrong remedy, whether it be devised by the Imperial Parliament or whether it originate with a local Legis-

lature, can hardly be applied to one part without danger of an evil effect being communicated by contagion to the remainder of the realm. To fling the loyal property-holding classes in Ireland as a prey to a furious proletariat would be not only a craven but a fatal expedient. To make a present of the freehold of Ireland at the expense of British taxpayers is equally impossible. The country may concede to Mr. Gladstone the credit of having advanced the discussion, by placing it upon the true path. He has pointed out, first, that the public interest justifies the intervention of the Government to facilitate the conversion of Irish leaseholds into freeholds on a great scale; and he has, secondly, laid down the principle that Government assistance might take the form of an Imperial loan, provided the repayment could be guaranteed by some responsible body interposed between the

Imperial Government and the individual local debtors.

It may be conceded that there is no probability of the desired subdivision being effected on a large scale, and within a reasonable period, by natural processes, in the absence of financial assistance from the Government. Small tenant-farmers have not, as a class, sufficient capital of their own to become purchasers. Their net annual profits from the land are necessarily insufficient to pay much more than rent, or (in case of a purchase) the interest upon their unpaid or borrowed purchase-money. That resource would therefore afford neither margin of security nor means of paying principal. Only by some form of Government guarantee could the rate of interest upon a purchaser's loan be so reduced as to leave a surplus out of the annual profits available to be applied towards the gradual extinction of the principal.

So far a majority of Mr. Gladstone's countrymen will probably be found to be in agreement with the objects he sets before them. But when he goes on to insist on his plan for giving effect to the principle—a plan which, as he states (in the speech referred to), 'absolutely and essentially requires, as a vital condition, the institution of a real Irish Government, able to speak and act for Ireland'—the sober English world naturally pauses—not only over the plan, but over the statement that it is the only method conceivable of arriving at the desired end.

Has not Mr. Gladstone undertaken to demonstrate a theorem, when he might more properly have propounded a problem?

Given that it is desirable that the Government should facilitate, by means of its guarantee, a subdivision of the freehold of the country, so that a ma-

majority of the electorate of the nation may be converted into absolute landowners ; the problem is to find some means whereby the Government may be so secured from the probability of loss by reason of the guarantee as to justify the aid being lent in that manner. The problem is one which addresses itself not so much to politicians as to financiers ; and it would seem extraordinary if, from the experience and commercial ability of the British Isles, a less perilous solution were not forthcoming than that which forms the subject of Mr. Gladstone's theorem.

A proposal to constitute the relation of creditor and debtor directly between the political Government and a large proportion of the people forming its constituents is one that Mr. Gladstone himself evidently feels would, from a financial point of view, be vicious and imprudent in the extreme.

But the objection equally applies,

whether such relation be between the Imperial Government and any of its constituencies directly, or between a Local Government and its local constituencies, or between the Imperial Government and a Local Government, 'able to speak and act for' one of the kingdoms.

If precedent be wanting to illustrate the danger arising from these relations, let me refer to what occurred in Canada when such an experiment was once ventured upon. The experiment included in its operation the wealthy, intelligent, and eminently respectable population of Upper Canada (now called Ontario). About thirty years ago the Provincial Government conceived that it would be advantageous to lend the benefit of the Provincial credit to the various municipalities, to assist them to borrow money for various local purposes, on terms which it would have been impossible for the municipalities to obtain on

their individual credit. These moneys were advanced by the Government to the various municipalities as a loan, to be repaid to the Government on terms defined by the Act of Parliament and agreed to by the municipalities. The money was duly spent by the municipalities—in some cases, perhaps, extravagantly, but generally in most useful and at least indirectly productive local works. But when the time for payment to the Government arrived all kinds of demurs arose. The debt was in fact practically repudiated by the municipalities for a long series of years. Party Governments shrank from the duty of enforcing payment at the price of alienating the support of the numerous constituencies affected. The ultimate result was that a composition was effected, by which the municipalities repaid a portion of the debt in full settlement of the whole.

I see no reason to doubt that the same

cause which made this financial experiment so disastrous in Canada would, in Ireland or any other country possessing popular representative institutions, tend to the same result of becoming a means of educating the people into public dishonesty. I think, therefore, that financiers would lay down, as a primary axiom to be observed, that the State should avoid constituting the relation of creditor and debtor directly between any political body and those upon whose suffrages it is dependent.

We know how to many minds Mr. Gladstone's particular scheme is subject to other serious objections. Political dangers claim a place in the consideration of the merits of a financial scheme. But such criticism is not my present object. I desire to confine my attention to the substantial question whether there is a possibility of finding means of remedying

the practical or agrarian grievance which exists in Ireland.

Accepting, then, those general principles to which the bold and ingenious mind of Mr. Gladstone has given prominence, cannot we adopt their advantages without also incurring those risks, political as well as financial, which the details of the plan actually proposed would involve?

The substance — I may repeat — of Mr. Gladstone's suggestion may be said to be, that an Imperial loan or the Imperial credit might safely be granted if repayment were secured by a *responsible guarantee corporation*. Let us eliminate from the proposal its more questionable elements, being those which give it a political character. Let us, if possible, exclude the idea of enforced expropriation, and of official valuation; and in lieu of a political guarantee corporation let us substitute a purely commercial one. Are there

not still left the outlines of a legitimate and practicable commercial project, calculated to satisfy a want felt not in Ireland only, but more or less throughout the United Kingdom?

If the effect of a Government guarantee would be to reduce the borrowing rate at which money could be obtained by such a corporation, say to three (3) per cent per annum, whereas the annual profit produced from land is at the rate of five (5) per cent per annum on the actual selling value, the difference would constitute the equivalent of a margin of security of forty per cent, or nearly equivalent to that upon which trust moneys are commonly lent. It seems to me that a private corporation might readily be created to obtain the advantage of this guarantee, and to make it available for the benefit of tenants or other small purchasers of agricultural holdings.

Let me venture to suggest, in merest

outline, the possible constitution and operations of what we may call a Land Loan Guarantee Company. What would be its prospects of profit—the inducement to its shareholders? What securities could be offered to the public against the Government guarantee of its debentures? And, finally, what probability is there of the facilities offered by the Company being taken advantage of by landlords and by tenants, and of its thus gradually introducing contentment into the now disturbed districts of Ireland, and securing future order, not only there, but, perhaps, in every part of the United Kingdom?

The Company would be incorporated upon the usual basis of a subscribed capital stock. The paid-up stock would constitute the guarantee fund required for the protection of the Government. The amount paid up, like the capital stock of a Life Insurance Company, would in the mean-

time be invested by the Company for the benefit of the shareholders, so as to yield them an income independently of their profits upon the special transactions of the Company. The Company would carry on purchase and sale transactions with funds obtained upon three per cent debentures, issued by the Company to the public with the endorsement of a Government guarantee. Its *modus operandi* would be as follows :—

Whenever the Company found a landlord desirous of selling at a price satisfactory to the Company (which we will assume to be twenty years' capitalisation of the real annual value, ascertained according to the judgment of the Company's valuers), and when the Company had also ascertained the willingness of a sufficient number of the tenants, or similar actual cultivators, to purchase at the same figures, the Company would enter into

the necessary contracts on both sides. Having provided by an issue of its debentures the amount of the purchase-money, it would pay the cash to the vendor in exchange for a conveyance, less a moderate brokerage or commission for effecting the sale. From this brokerage the Company would derive its profits.

Turning to the tenant purchaser, the Company would now become the vendors. The terms of the contract with the tenant purchaser might be, first, interest at three per cent upon the unpaid purchase-money remaining from time to time, the tenant having full possession subject to condition of ultimate forfeiture if this interest should be in arrear beyond a reasonable period for redemption; second, the payment of the purchase-money by instalments, of amounts not exceeding the balance of the net annual value: forfeiture to occur only for gross and negligent default in paying a

minimum instalment : as, for instance, upon failure to pay any such instalment for three years continuously.

If the real profit-making capacity of the land were fairly ascertained by the Company's valuers in the first instance, exceptional seasons and depreciated markets could never, except upon the rarest and most calamitous occasions, exceed the forty per cent that was estimated to be the margin between the tenant's total net profits from the land and the three per cent interest. The effect of defaults not exceeding the margin would therefore only postpone the period at which the purchase would be completed. Until the price was fully paid, the land would continue to be in the Company's hands as a security. Deliberate and continued default would be so much against the interest of purchasers that it might be expected never to happen, save in most exceptional instances of dis-

sipation or misfortune. Such is the experience of offices and individuals operating in similar credit sales to similar occupiers in Canada.

The following extract from the statement made at the annual meeting of the British-American Land Company, held in London on March 31st last, will be interesting in this connexion. It was stated by the Chairman : ' As to the collection of principal and interest, we must recollect that the purchasers of our lands during the whole period of our existence have all been people who have gone out with very little money. We have had to give encouragement to apparently industrious, hard-working people, who desired to acquire lands to clear them and settle. Consequently our Commissioners have always, with the sanction of the Directors, allowed payments of principal and interest to stand over for lengthened periods. If the pur-

chaser is a man likely, by his industry and labour, to come round and be able to pay his purchase-money and interest, he is allowed to remain unmolested.' As to the result of their operations, the Deputy-Governor said : ' For many years now the proprietors have been getting something like five per cent upon their capital, besides which there have been considerable returns of capital.'*

The real risk of loss to the Company would be dependent, exactly as the case of a Loan or Investment Company, upon the management of the Company, and its judgment in selecting honest and capable

* Financial readers, of course, will know that the expectation of profit of the Canadian Company is not on an identical basis with that under discussion ; but that the difference between speculative purchase on the one hand, and sale on commission on the other, is found on the average to be rather in favour of the latter than the former. Many men thrive as land agents ; very few as land speculators.

valuators. Against this latter risk of loss it would not be legitimate to guarantee the Company. On the contrary, the commercial skill and prudence dictated by the self-interest of the shareholders should form the protection of the Government. The shareholders, like the members of any other commercial corporation, would have no right to expect indemnity, except through their own discretion and vigilance in the selection of their officials.

We have said that in all probability an exceedingly small proportion of the purchasers would be found to fail to pay, sooner or later, the instalments of purchase-money, in addition to their interest. As soon as a number of instalments had been paid on any purchase, a substantial margin would have been created, sufficient itself to secure the debentures outstanding in respect of that transaction. This might be considered by the Government in taking an

account, from time to time, of the general liability of the Company, to which the amount of capital stock would have reference. Hence, a stock paid up to about twenty-five per cent upon the current debenture liabilities of the Company might be found to afford ample security to the Government against any liability to be called on to make good its guarantee of the debentures. The commissions upon sales would therefore provide an accumulating rest, equivalent to a fair dividend annually upon the invested capital of the shareholders.

But assuming, as we do, that the investment of capital in this experiment would be a public advantage, if special inducements should be found necessary to attract the investing public into the desired channel, it would be quite legitimate that the Company should be assisted to a limited extent; that is to

say, with a definite Government subvention.

The Company's organization would, in reality, be performing functions equivalent to those of a Government department : with the difference that a Government department would do the same work upon official instead of upon commercial principles ; that is to say, less practically, less efficiently, and far less economically, and with all the dangers and dissatisfaction arising from political complications. For a certain number of years the Government might grant a sum sufficient to cover the expenses of management, in carrying out the first stages of an experiment which would be so much in the public interest. A Government subvention so limited, would be, at least, as appropriate as many postal subsidies, given with a view to encouraging new mail connexions, or as the Government assistance to

railways so common in India and the Colonies.

Next, as to the probability of vendors and purchasers taking advantage of the intervention of such a Company. Would landlords be found willing to sell to the Company? Would tenants be induced to purchase from it? I think, with fair management, the Company's operations would grow in a very short time from small to large proportions. For bringing about a common agreement as to a proper selling price, the Company's valuers, as practical and impartial men having no interest except that of the Company to regard, ought in time to exert the greatest authority on the minds of both vendors and purchasers. The Company would clearly have no temptation to pay upon an exaggerated estimate of annual value, because their own security as ultimate vendors being

dependent on the correctness of that estimate would in that case be so much the worse. If rents have habitually been excessive, or if events have caused a real diminution in the rent-paying power of land, the operations of the Company would be sure to ascertain the fact, and to make plain the exact nature of it to all parties.

At the same time, in consequence of the remarkable facilities afforded by the Government guarantee, the Company's terms to the vendor on the one hand, and to the purchaser on the other, would be more favourable than either could, under any other circumstances, expect.

Tenants, it is obvious, would be in the same position as if their rents had been immediately cut down forty per cent : the excess becoming payable practically at the tenant's convenience, and every sum so received being at once paid to the tenant's credit towards the purchase of the land.

It is on the side of the tenants that the greatest doubt and distrust would at first exist. Much would depend upon the conviction being created in their minds that the Company was conducted upon commercial principles, and without any special bias in favour of the landlords or vendors. The Company desiring, like other companies, to increase the scope of its transactions, would take care to further the growth of this confidence by a judicious selection of its directorate. It might find advantage in adding to its central board consulting bodies of local directors, composed of men chosen for the confidence they were known to command in their neighbourhoods. Might it not be hoped that the Company would prove so successful in promoting sales by voluntary agreement as to anticipate any necessity for resorting to compulsion, either to effect sales or to fix the valuation of the land? The process of

mutual agreement would have an immeasurable advantage over any judicial processes or official machinery that could be devised.

Ordinary judicial machinery, with its evidence, its arguments, and its appeals, is ruinously expensive. Official machinery is arbitrary in principle, and continually open to the suspicion of oppression on the one hand and of political, if not personal, corruption on the other. The necessity for compulsory methods ought to be proved to exist—after fair experiment upon a voluntary process—before shaking the basis of landed credit by introducing the principle of political valuation.

Extreme legislative powers, such as compulsory expropriation and fixing a Parliamentary price, would still exert a not unreasonable share of potency, even while remaining in reserve. Landlords

disposed to be unduly exacting are not likely to be unmindful that a

‘Two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.’

But so far as landlords are concerned, no process of expropriation is likely to be required. The landlords would be found to be willing vendors. The obstacle to the distribution of land by natural processes, which once existed in these islands, may be said no longer to exist. The possession of land upon a large scale is not now, to the extent it once was, a source of prestige, and still less is it a source of profit. The commodity may be said to be losing its fashion price, and is becoming obtainable in the market at its intrinsic value. In the hands of no one is that intrinsic value so great as in the hands of the actual tiller of his own acres. Landlords might be well satisfied

with a cash price equivalent to twenty years' capitalisation based upon the tillers' net profit from the land.

One consequence to be expected from an increase of small freeholds would be an increased local demand for money. Loans would be required by the tenants to procure the necessary stock and to make useful improvements; and to no one ought it to be more natural for each to apply than to his former landlord. If partly by this means a twenty years' capitalisation could be reinvested at five per cent, the vendor's sacrifice of price would be more fanciful than real. Land has so far fallen from its place as a first-class security that the fair relation of its capital to its annual value is not what it was. It might be reckoned as being now rather lower than higher than the average of commercial investments.

But even if it should prove that some

actual loss of income were to be involved, the apparent sacrifice would be of that kind which a business man often makes in taking in a new associate to strengthen the concern. It seems desirable in Ireland, and it may speedily become necessary in England, for the landed interest, for its own security, to take a greater proportion of the nation into partnership; and in doing so, the present possessors must expect to transfer that portion of their stock taken by the new partner, not upon the highest and most sanguine estimate, but upon the most moderate and safest valuation.

Changes, no doubt, more sweeping and immediate, would be produced by a compulsory system than by a voluntary one. But the present proposition is not designed to effect a masked revolution in Ireland. It is only from the point of view of an extreme class of local

politicians that it is desirable that the whole order of society in that country should be deranged by a universal compulsory expropriation—a kind of ostracism—of the whole of the present landholding class.

Public policy requires no more than that a proper equilibrium should be attained in the body politic. That object would be sufficiently accomplished so soon as a mere *majority* of the people had become sharers with the present owners in the national freehold. It is, perhaps, virtually accomplished the moment the power of gradually becoming freeholders has been placed within the reach of the majority in Ireland and in the other parts of the British Islands. The present proposition is designed purely to carry out that politico-economic object, as nearly as possible, by commercial processes.

That some permanent benefits might

result from subdivision of a part of the freehold of the country, is suggested by the following passage from that trustworthy observer, Arthur Young :—

‘The cottars on a farm cannot go from one to another in order to find a good master, as in England; for all the country is in the same system, and no redress to be found.’—(*Tour in Ireland*, p. 112.)

Debt, death, and emigration, would be continually throwing small parcels into the market: and the temptation to non-cultivators to compete against cultivators being so much less than it once was, the price is not likely to be raised above its natural value.

In one respect legislation might legitimately intervene, to assist many Irish and even English landlords to accept a reasonable price for their property. A very large number, perhaps a majority, of landowners, have, at the present time, a nominal rather

than a beneficial interest. They are invested, like the ryots of India, with a burden rather than a possession. Family settlements have buried the nominal ownership under a series of incumbrances, the sum of which now perhaps exceeds the actual value of the land. It seems to me that the principle under which equity deals in abating legacies under wills might be applied in an extended form to many of these cases. Testators or settlers have charged estates in the hands of their heirs, or residuary devisees, or other ultimate beneficiaries, with portions and incumbrances for the benefit of other members of the ancestors' families. At the time such settlements were made, the portions were fixed upon the supposition that the land which was left to the heir was a thing of a perpetual and unshrinkable value, and that the residuary interest was as certain as the previous charges. A condition of

things having arisen which has falsified that expectation, it is reasonable that (to the extent required to facilitate a public object) the equitable principle of abatement should be called in, to redress the now uneven balance between the incumbered heir and the legatee members of his family. The latter are now made preferential creditors in a manner and to an extent never contemplated by the original testator. At the same time, the operation of such legislation would require to be limited by due respect to the position of purchasers or mortgagees for value.

The Legislature might also assist the Company to cheapen, and thereby facilitate, transfers. Even without legislation the Company would have the advantage of being able, at the cost of a single investigation for the whole property, to furnish the purchaser of each allotment with a guaranteed title without expense

to him. But the Legislature might very beneficially fortify the Company in this respect with special powers and indemnities in regard to merely technical difficulties, both of title and of transfer.

It is possible that certain obstacles, beyond those of a properly financial nature, may be pointed to as standing in the way of a scheme of this kind.

It is clear, of course, that commercial enterprise cannot reasonably be invited to the aid of any country where property and the law of contract are not guaranteed by the Government. And it will be said, perhaps, that whatever advantages such a scheme might offer to the tenants to become purchasers, financial investors cannot be blind to the possibility that local demagogism—that false friend and constant peril of the Irish peasantry—will exert all its sinister force to prevent

the success of an organization tending to the pacification of the country.

Discontent, no doubt, has long been a matrix of demagogic power ; and perhaps among the men whom the Irish agitation has brought to the surface some, unhappily, may be found base enough to act like a dishonest physician, capable of prolonging the profitable sufferings of the confiding patient. But a more general charge would be so much against the honour of human nature, that it is surely not to be entertained in advance of proof.

Be they few or many, such men, we may be confident, will have to reckon, as adverse to them, several factors that hitherto have either counted in their favour or been substantially inert.

In the first place, there is encouragement in the resolute disposition manifested by the majority in the present Parliament. It is reassuring to have a Parliament

which appears to know its own mind in this matter.

The issues that have been raised by the Opposition, and their extraordinary methods of attack, are tending to rally to the defence—alongside of those who support the Cabinet of the day on party grounds—all those who feel that they are interested in the support of government as an institution.

Much of what is being urged against the adoption of the necessary means for the enforcement of rudimentary law would form more appropriate argument from the mouths of the followers of Confucius than from the countrymen of Hampden. The objectors would commit Freedom to an irrational and unalterable slavery to her own precedents. The fact is, that not in Ireland alone, but in all countries which have inherited British institutions, the people have long been growing restive under the

rude and antiquated inefficiency of the jury system as a means of coping with the scientific crime of modern time. Since time has levelled the privileges of rank and substituted the commonwealth for the king in the place of power, the ancient defences which once were useful as safeguards of popular liberty are often found to be mere barriers in the way of society ; obstructions to the general well-being of the people itself. The spirit which refuses to see these defects, and fears to attempt to amend the hallowed institution accordingly, is the spirit of Chinese Conservatism rather than the spirit of progressive Liberalism.

In the next place, the law, if effectually maintained, must soon have on its side an important auxiliary in the common sense of the peasantry of Ireland. If an honest means of an intelligible and simply commercial character can be actually put within

the reach of each individual: if before each lies the offer that, merely by steady industry and the performance of a fair contract, he may slowly but surely raise himself out of all the annoyances of his tenant condition into the position of an independent freeholder, he will be likely to scrutinise pretty closely the arguments and the motives of those who not only would dissuade him from adopting that simple plan of adjustment, but invite him to maintain a condition of disorder which would keep those commercial remedies at a distance. Only madmen would wantonly court the miseries of a civil war; and is not that the implied alternative if reasonable terms of settlement are to be declined?

A final influence which may be counted upon with a certain amount of confidence is the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Sentiments and habits of mind

undeniably come under the proper domain of a religious teacher, if questions of material expediency do not; and principles have been advocated, practices are encouraged, which the conscience of the Church must unite with the reason of the civilised world in condemning.

To some minds, remembering what are the natural sympathies and what has been the historic policy of the Irish priesthood, the statement of such a hope may sound like a paradox. Why, however, should the Irish priests desire to go on lashing the subsiding waves of discontent, after the peasantry themselves had cause to be satisfied? They, of course, are not blind to all that agitation implies in Ireland. One is not prepared to conceive the Irish priesthood applying itself to keeping up an agitation against the peace and order of society after it had clearly become utterly causeless. The only motive suggested, the

only one conceivable, is a distant hope of ultimately aggrandising Roman Catholic influence in Ireland through the establishment of a National Government. But the power of acting, and the responsibility for acting in that matter, would not rest in the breasts of the local priesthood. It would be a question of policy affecting larger interests, and dependent upon determinations formed in a calmer region. To conceive the Roman Curia deliberately entering upon such a course for the sake of such an object is to attribute to that body an unprecedented amount of political folly, in addition to the most cynical inhumanity. As a matter of policy, the Church of Rome could ill afford deliberately and wantonly to throw down a gage of direct hostility to the Government of the British Empire.

Ireland is not the only stake that the Church of Rome holds in that Empire.

Where is, for instance, a more important and a more privileged Catholic population to be found in the world than the million and a half of Canadians of French extraction inhabiting the province of Quebec? The protection enjoyed by the Catholic Church in that province has been owing to the provisions enacted by the Imperial Parliament—provisions far exceeding in liberality any requirements imposed by the Treaty of Cession. A feeling is growing up in the Dominion that those privileges are excessive, and that they have been abused to the promotion of Philo-Gallic and disloyal tendencies. The English-speaking and Protestant communities of the Dominion are becoming restive over the perpetuation of this union of religious privilege with political power. Already threatening murmurs have been heard from that quarter. The time could not be less propitious for raising similar feel-

ings of jealousy and distrust to a height throughout the Empire. Policy at least forbids the Church of Rome from exhibiting her organization working as an alien and hostile influence against the power that protects it.

But bigotry itself must credit a Christian Church with higher motives. In spite of grievous faults in the past—in spite, I might say, of historic crimes—the men who rule in the central councils of the Church of Rome cannot forget that the Church does not exist for its own aggrandisement ; that that great corporation is only a means to an end. Its policy must be moulded in consistency with its professed aim—the improvement of human character and the amelioration of the condition of mankind by the peaceful influence of a holy religion. Sooner or later the Church must take its place beside the Law. Its ideal is one that refuses to be bent : it forbids to

consult popularity first and the interests of civilisation afterwards. A Church cannot, like modern demagogism, frankly take its policy from below.

III.

THE writer has ventured to sketch a principle in which he finds reasons for hoping that so far as concerns, at least, the one radical cause of Irish difficulties that has become patent to all English statesmen, the remedy for that evil is not beyond the grasp of ordinary British financial enterprise, supplemented and encouraged by legislative measures, not startling in character, nor needing to be carried to an imprudent extent. Obviously, even if the principle were approved, many details would remain to be supplied which it would be presumption on the part of the present writer to attempt to work out.

Upon what conditions ought the Government to offer its guarantee? To how many Corporations? Might a monopoly

be created, or should a free competition of Companies be invited? Supposing the suggestion I have ventured to advance to be thought worthy of criticism, one of the questions would be, By what steps is the project to be brought to an actual test? Would the initiative rest with the financial public, or does it lie upon the Government?

There are good reasons why the Government would be reluctant to take the first step in the matter. There are also good reasons why the financial public would decline the responsibility. In my own opinion the initiative at the present time would not properly rest with either. The criticism of the principle, and, if that be approved, the definition of details, should belong to a body better qualified than the one and more disinterested than the other of the two mentioned.

But when we commence to search for such a body, where do we find it?

The question brings us face to face with one of the most significant facts of modern times—the inadequacy of all existing parliamentary bodies for the discussion of industrial questions : for disposing of those great *crucies* of the day which are presenting themselves before all civilised nations ? If this is equivalent to charging our Legislatures with complete incompetency, it has not been left to the writer to lay the indictment.

When the pit-women of Devonshire lately sent a deputation to the Home Secretary in reference to the proposed legislation affecting that industry, the essence of the matter was put in a very straightforward manner by the spokeswoman of the deputation. She said that Parliament would do better to leave local trade matters alone, for it had no knowledge of them, and only muddled when it meddled with them ; and the Home

Secretary very frankly admitted the justice of the homely-worded impeachment.

For all the purposes of a deliberative body Parliament may be said to be an acknowledged failure. Fifty years ago the credit of Parliamentary institutions stood high. They were the inheritance and the pride of the English nations ; they were the hope of the Continental nations struggling for a similar freedom. To-day they are everywhere fallen into something much more like contempt. Abroad their progress has received a definite check. Criticism, even in this their original British home, has gone so far as to cast doubts, not upon their perfection only, but even upon their durability.

Their practical manifestation of this modern contempt for Parliament has been perhaps the most conspicuous feature in the conduct of the Irish Parliamentary party. To most minds this appeared as a

most grievous—in fact, an utterly unpardonable—course of action. But have the Irish done more than prick a bubble; putting an end, with rather brutal sincerity, to a lingering delusion? Delusions are never without their danger: and in forcing attention to the weak point in Parliamentary Government it may appear in the end that the Irish have done the public interest a service rather than an injury.

The universally changed sentiment towards Parliament is not difficult to account for. It is only recently, in the latter quarter of the century, that representative institutions have really been subjected to such a critical test of their fitness as has brought their deficiencies to light.

It is in the end for a business purpose that Parliaments exist. They are intended as a means for the despatch of public business and to provide the legis-

lation necessary for the nation. To that end have modern nations borne with the long process of Constitution-mongering. That was always intended to be the work of the machine when the interminable process of preparing and polishing, altering and re-amending—that favourite occupation of politicians—was completed. Now towards what objects is modern legislation most commonly directed? What are the burning questions of the day? Are they not, almost without exception, almost necessarily questions connected with the material wants of society? They belong, in other words, to the order of economical and industrial questions. For a public body fit to undertake the determination of such questions there are two indispensable requisites. It must be qualified; that is to say, its members should be skilled in the questions at issue, and in that respect properly representative of the various

classes interested. In the next place it ought to be single-minded. If in the nature of the case its spirit and methods cannot be entirely judicial, at least they should be in the spirit of frank and honourable negotiation, of sincere and responsible advocacy.

If these are the necessary qualifications, it is nothing to be wondered at that Parliaments should fail in their task when these questions had to be entertained.

Parliaments altogether lack those qualifications. Their members are not chosen as experts for any special experience or knowledge : they are not respectively the genuine and authoritative representatives of the various industrial interests making up the Commonwealth ; and, above all, they are too often controlled in their actions by maxims and influenced by motives which render debate necessarily insincere, and tend to remove voting as far as possible

from the category of a scientific or a judicial determination.

Who believes that the great abstract question of Free Trade or Protection has yet been entertained by a body capable of arriving at an authoritative decision, as the result of an adequate or representative and honest examination? Who does not fear to see the various questions between labourers and capitalists made the sport of the irresponsible demagogism of our legislatures? What a dangerous prospect opens before commerce if the infinitely important but also infinitely delicate question of the Currency should be taken up in that spirit in this country, as the example of American Congresses warns us to expect may yet be done? The proper incidence of taxation, the laws of inheritance, the State regulation of carriers,—can any one assert that the Parliaments and other popular legislatures at present con-

stituted are well adapted for the fair, honest, and wise discussion of these great public questions? The Land question is another of the same series. In the hands of political legislatures all have received the same inadequate kind of treatment, although not always with equally serious results.

In the *History of Our Own Times*, the case of his countrymen is stated by Justin M'Carthy apparently with perspicuity and fairness. I quote the conclusion of his chapter on the subject: 'Wherever this tenant-right principle prevailed there was industry, there was prosperity. Where it did not prevail was the domain of poverty, idleness, discontent, and crime. The one demand of the Irish agricultural population everywhere was for some form of fixity of tenure. Let it be sought by legitimatising the Ulster custom everywhere, or by declaring that men should hold their land as

long as they paid a fair rent, to be fixed by authorised and impartial valuation, or by some plan of establishing a peasant proprietary: let the demand be made as it would, there was substantially one demand and one only—security of tenure. The demand was neglected or refused by generations of English statesmen, simply because no statesman would take the trouble to distinguish words and things: between shadowy, pedantic theories, and clear, substantial facts.

“ ‘Tenant right,’ said Lord Palmerston, amid the cheers of *an assembly mainly composed of landlords*, “is landlords’ wrong.”’

With the changed franchise the representation has been changed. Now the Irish contingent in Parliament is almost wholly a contingent of tenants. Therefore Mr. Gladstone says the *tenants* now constitute Ireland—*their* cries alone must be taken as the articulate outcome

of the voices of all the residents of that country.

Such is Parliamentary representation. It is but the swinging of a pendulum. The voting at general elections results in sweeping alternations : at one time in practically exclusive landlord representation, and in practically exclusive tenant representation at another time. The politicians give us estimates of majorities and counter-majorities : their minds are determined by these calculations of political arithmetic, and not by the actual merits of the question at issue. The principle of modern demagogism is to consult the supposed will of masses and of classes, instead of labouring to guide their judgment.

Where, then, are not only the Irish, but all other 'constitutionally-governed' peoples, to seek for their remedy? In fresh political devices? in tinkerings of the

Constitution, new balancing of suffrages, readjustment of powers?

The creation of new political legislatures is merely to reproduce the system, not to reform it. From a Home Rule Parliament what more could we expect than that it would provide a minor theatre for the exhibition, by provincial actors, of the same old play of Demagogism?

By localisation and multiplication of Legislatures the evil is aggravated, rather than minimised. In the experience of the United States and Canada, the same sinister features are repeated, and generally in a grosser form, as we descend in the scale of representation. The Senate of the United States at one end of the scale is the most respectable; the City governments are almost Mephistophelian in their cynical disregard of public duties, and in their gross and venial demagogism. Negligence, if not

corruption, in private legislation, and ignorant handling of more general interests—these are too frequently the characteristics of local legislatures. Legislation surely is a science—the necessary wisdom and experience to touch that delicate structure, the laws of a country, are not to be picked up in every field. In the experience of the American Continent morality and commerce suffer from the immense variety of crude legislation. Each locality is a law to itself. Marriage and divorce, commercial principles, every form of civil right, are tinkered at in different fashions. What is to be done with those machines, which insist upon grinding? In some States the Legislature has actually been prohibited from meeting oftener than biennially. The land swarms with provincial Lycurguses: till everywhere the reflective part of the community is sighing for some means of

putting a check upon those mischievous activities.

It seems to me that the evil plainly suggests a different—in fact, an opposite—direction from which to seek its remedy.

A freedom-loving race is almost of necessity also a self-helpful race. Professor Seeley, speaking in his *Expansion of England* of the self-development of the old Colonies, says: ‘Assemblies were not formally instituted, but grew up of themselves, because it was the nature of Englishmen to assemble. Thus the old historian of the Colonies, Hutchinson, writes under the year 1619, “This year a *house of burgesses broke out* in Virginia.”’ It is, therefore, not surprising that the signs should seem to be discernible of a spontaneous movement for the correction of the evils so universally experienced.

The evil is found everywhere co-existing with *indirect* class representation

in political bodies. May it not be cured by *actual* class representation in an independent, non-political body?

All economical questions (that is to say, nearly the whole subject-matter of modern legislation) are questions between various industrial classes. If chosen members of the different trades and other interests affected were frankly to meet one another and, from their respective points of view, authoritatively negotiate and debate any of those economical subjects (which Parliaments sometimes rush at, but generally evade), would they not advance more rapidly to some kind of an agreement than under the present system, which keeps the real parties to the controversy not so much at arm's length as out of speaking distance with each other?

What Carlyle wrote regarding Chartism and the wishes and discontent of the labouring classes in 1839, seems to be applicable

to the Irish land problem, and to many other of the threatening class difficulties of the present time throughout the world:—

‘As ’tis well said, battle is misunderstanding; did the parties know one another, the battle would cease. No man at bottom means injustice; it is always for some obscure distorted image of a right that he contends; an obscure image, diffracted and exaggerated in the wonderfulest way by natural exasperation of contest, till at length it becomes all but irreconisable; yet still the image of a right. Could a man own that the thing he fought for was wrong, contrary to fairness and the law of reason, he would own also that it thereby stood condemned and hopeless; he could fight for it no longer.’

How peculiarly applicable to the case of Ireland and its Land question! The disturbance from which the Irish suffer is partly economical, but it is also partly

mental. When neither party is satisfied with the authority before which its claims have to be brought, the decisions and the inaction of such a body alike seem only to aggravate discontent.

How far is Parliament from being either a conference of qualified negotiators, or a single-minded and disinterested tribunal!

In the settlement of the agrarian dispute, not only is the Irish landlord entitled to be heard, even though in a minority, but there are also other interests that are affected, whose representatives are not at present in any formal manner called into the consultation. How can any legislation (not to mention a Constitutional revolution like Home Rule) be proposed for the purpose of affecting the great landed interests without affecting in its turn every other industrial class? Are the bankers, the merchants, the manufacturers, the car-

riers of Ireland, to have no opportunity of recording their vote, of even offering their counsel? It must be admitted that they have interests to which their mere voting power in an election is by no means proportioned. Must not their advice have value? Is it not possible that they might lead the discussion in a direction entirely different from any that it has yet taken? Can any settlement which has not their concurrence be expected to be satisfactory? Ought not even the labouring class to be heard by separate representatives independently of their employers, the tenant-farmers? Is it by any means certain that their interests are identical?

Now these various classes are formed into associations. If any of them have not yet organized themselves, it is in their own hands to follow the general example.

Thus the elements of what I would entitle an Industrial Parliament are already

in existence. The various trades and professional assemblies form natural constituencies, from which, by a voluntary system of representation, might arise a new national deliberative assembly in each of the English-speaking nations. Silently, without the assistance of a statesman or the guidance of a scholar, those materials have been making ready. They have appeared. A stone has been cut out without hands. Commencing with the labour organizations—to which may be given the credit of setting the example—there is scarcely, in at least the United States and Canada, an industrial pursuit, whether manufacturing, financial, agricultural, or commercial, that has not developed within itself an organization for the discussion and cultivation of its particular interests. For these various bodies to agree to send their representatives to form a joint assembly would seem to be a step of such self-

evident feasibility that there only wants an occasion—a promise of practical benefits to follow from the experiment—to ensure its being made.

In a Parliament, wrote Carlyle, ‘the matter’ (class discontents) ‘is debated of, demonstrated, contradicted, qualified, reduced to feasibility ; or can at least solace itself with hope, and die gently : convinced of unfeasibility.’ ‘Could the contending parties get but accurately to discern one another’s might and strength to contend, the one would peaceably yield to the other and to necessity ; the contest in this case too were over.’

The utility for which Carlyle hoped, unfortunately in vain, from the imperfect machinery of political parliaments, might with much more probability be expected from a purely Industrial Parliament.

Political Parliaments do not sin through ignorance only. *Insincerity* in dealing with

public questions—handling them not according to their merits, but with a view to the votes they may bring or lose; this is demagogism—this is the master political evil of the day.

Our existing Legislatures are so constituted as to promote this insincerity, since they are themselves founded upon a pretence that is contrary to the truth. Professedly those Legislatures are representative bodies, while in fact, for the purposes I have spoken of, for the purpose of dealing deliberatively with the greater practical objects of legislation, they really are not representative.

Political legislatures are composed of members elected from geographical constituencies, upon a system which supposes every interest, every class of inhabitants in each electoral district, to agree with every other interest and class in choosing a common representative. But the great

questions of the day being industrial and economical ones, there is hardly one of them which does not differently affect the interests of individual classes or fractions of the constituency; and hardly any two of such classes are at present agreed as to where the line of justice lies between them, or even as to what is the *modus vivendi* dictated by expediency. For which of them, then, is the geographical representative expected to speak?

The experience of courts of equity has dictated, as necessary for the purposes of justice, the practice of requiring separate counsel to be present before them when distinct, and therefore possibly conflicting, rights are to be argued. If some of the parties are infants, or otherwise specially under the protection of the Court, the rule is inexorably insisted upon. The principle of human nature upon which this practice is based holds good when applied to repre-

sentation or advocacy, on however large a scale. As no man can serve two masters, so no one can in a debate truly represent two or more contending interests.

Is the position of an infant in law more in need of protection than the position of the inhabitant of a constituency represented in one of our party legislatures? Is any suitor before the courts more helplessly in the hands of his counsel than are the interests of the various elements of the population in the hands of their nominal advocate?

Yet in the constitution of our political legislatures we wholly disregard the salutary practice admitted to be necessary in courts of justice. The consequences are not surprising.

Geographical representatives being unable to trace their responsibility to any distinct source,—disputing among themselves whether to consider themselves the

agents of their localities, or representatives of the nation at large,—practically escape all responsibility. The authority to create responsibility resides not in vague ideas but in organizations of men. Neither the masses of people resident in a locality nor the greater masses comprising a nation can act with sufficient clearness to control a member's conscience. A conscience thus left empty, without a legitimate inhabitant, soon becomes the natural home of evil spirits. The organizations of party have seized the position which neither constituencies nor country were fitted to occupy. Party is the source to which nearly all members owe their position originally. To party they have to answer for their actions, and to it also they look for the direction of their consciences.

The managing element in the caucus or convention scans the merits of every subject with one eye fixed on the interests of

the party leaders and the prospective effects upon the party vote. The same process becomes a part of every aspiring politician's trade. He practises the art of forming his opinions upon matters of legislation in a manner which will give least displeasure to that one class which appears to him to be the most numerous, or the most influential, or the most determined element of his constituency. Experience teaches him that the insincerity (though often palpable) and the gross inconsistencies arising from this system, involve surprisingly little risk to the discipline of his party following.

What can be more extraordinary as a result of free government than the fact that the prevailing feeling with which an important portion, perhaps amounting to a majority, of the people in free countries, look upon those whom they call their representatives is one of distrust? Com-

merce and industry are put into a state of unrest by the mere threat of demagogic meddling. At a time when there are many subjects of a practical nature calling pressingly for legislative consideration, the prospect of any action being taken upon them by the constituted authorities of the nation presents itself to the commercial community as something to be deprecated rather than invoked.

Society is in a situation like that of a man suffering from a mangled limb, and in want of surgical aid, yet dreading from experience to entrust himself to the hands of the only available practitioner.

At the risk of an apparent digression, let me draw from the experience of Canada an illustration of the manner in which industrial questions fare in politicians' hands.

In 1878, in the depth of the world-wide commercial depression of that year, a general election was held in Canada.

The party then in opposition, with a suddenness equal to that with which American politicians have recently become students of Henry George, became a convert, immediately before the elections, to the principles of Protection (attractively entitled a 'National Policy'), as the remedy for trade depression. The country was willing to catch at any straw; so upon its National Policy cry the Liberal-Conservative party (as it called itself), to its own great astonishment (almost to its consternation), was carried into power by an overwhelming majority. Into the vexed question of the merits of such a policy, or of its success or failure as a commercial measure in Canada (where it has continued to prevail), I do not propose to enter. But the one particular flaw—from which no Protectionist system has yet been found free—soon made itself apparent in Canada. To equalise the incidence and

benefit of the duties is a problem about as difficult as perpetual motion. To prevent the greatest injustice, continual readjustments become necessary. When that nice balance has to be entrusted to a politician's hand, it may be imagined what additional influences come into play.

In Canada, after a time, the duties upon wheat and flour urgently required alteration. Originally duties had been imposed on flour to compensate Ontario (the great milling province of the Dominion), for a duty placed upon coals in the supposed interest of the mining provinces, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Then, as a consequence of the duty on flour, what was no doubt intended to be a corresponding duty was placed on wheat, to please the Ontario farmers in their turn. It happened (through some miscalculation, no doubt) that the duty placed on wheat was in fact relatively higher than the duty

on flour—the manufactured product. But for the time, the higher duty on wheat was regarded as a thing of no moment, because Canada as a whole produced a surplus of wheat for export; the province of Ontario itself had hitherto done so. While this was the case the home price would be regulated by the foreign price, without regard to the import duties under the Canadian tariff. The wheat duty was therefore looked upon as a merely illusory provision, a harmless wile of the politicians, by which they gratified the farmers without incurring opposition from any other quarter. It was smiled at then as a very masterpiece of demagoguism. Unfortunately, as is well known, one or two bad years recently occurred, making the Canadian wheat crop, for the first time, fall considerably below the home demand, and obliging the Ontario millers to import some of the wheat required to be

manufactured even for Canadian consumption. The moment this occurred the duty on wheat was no longer illusory. The millers of Canada found themselves suffering from what was practically a discrimination against them; an actual bounty in favour of flour made by the foreign miller. The Canadian millers thus had a last straw added in their case to the difficulties under which all of their trade on the American Continent were commencing to labour. Many once prosperous men found themselves reduced to actual ruin; few, if any, escaped the most serious losses. Naturally, they turned to Parliament for relief. They asked that either the duty on flour should be increased, or the duty on wheat reduced to the extent necessary to put an end to the discrimination against them in favour of foreign millers. The petition gave the signal for a very carnival of demagogism.

The millers pointed out that in the name of Protection the oldest industry of the Dominion was being crushed out of existence ; that this could not be to the interest of the country or that of the farmers themselves ; and urged that it was the duty of the Government to prevent it, even at some temporary risk to their popularity.

Had any mutual assembly existed in which a frank conference might have taken place between the honest representatives of these different interests, I believe that the millers' contention, having not only justice but common sense on its side, would have prevailed.

It seemed to be the duty of legislators to yield to such arguments as the millers presented ; but the business of demagogues is to consult votes rather than to weigh reasons. Since Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (being consumers and not

producers of wheat and flour) would not suffer any higher duties to be imposed on flour, it became a question of lowering the duty on wheat. Now, the party in opposition being averse to Protection generally, might have been expected to warmly concur in a reduction of that particular protective impost, even irrespective of its unjust and injurious effects. The Government, on the other hand, on Protectionist principles should have favoured the reduction, being a reduction on a raw material for the encouragement of a manufacture. In fact, the parties reversed their respective attitudes over this question.

The Free Trade opposition saw an opportunity to embarrass the Protectionist Government. Indirectly, but effectively, their press stirred up the farmers to resist the reduction of the wheat duties, impressing upon them that the duties had really begun to operate in their favour by

raising the local price of wheat above the world's market price.

But the Government, on their side, evaded the dilemma by following a simple principle of decision first enunciated by a certain Dutch governor: of whom it is related that when he found that the suitors' books seemed to be of the same weight, he declared that they balanced one another, and so dismissed the suit. The millers' votes, together with their arguments, appearing to be balanced by the farmers' votes, the ruinous and indefensible duty was left unchanged.

In vain the poor millers protested against being ruined by an unnatural policy. Their arguments were not calculated to affect the minds of politicians. *Their* answer was in practice like that of Talleyrand to the beggar who asked an alms of him. 'A man must live,' pleaded the man. '*Je n'en vois pas la nécessité,*' Talleyrand replied.

All English-speaking peoples are interested in seeking for an antidote to demagogism, for all are sufferers in common from the same disease of the body politic.

Wherever the English have gone as colonists, they have carried popular government along with them, and with the system have gone the defects of the system. Everywhere, upon the foundations of freedom, party has erected a throne for the demagogue. Everywhere the legislatures have degenerated into dependent cousins-german of the caucus; they have come to be representative no longer of the people, but only of the parties.

The present generation would not find much amiss in Carlyle's scornful description of the working of our much-prized political systems, that perhaps seemed startling to the public of 1839:—

‘The English people are used to suf-

frage ; it is their panacea for all that goes wrong with them ; they have a fixed idea of suffrage. Singularly enough, one's right *to send one's twenty-thousandth part of a master of tongue fence* to national palaver—the doctors asserted that this was freedom, this and no other. It seemed credible to many men, of high degree and of low.'

The experiment of endeavouring to find in an Industrial Parliament a more truly representative and probably a more efficient deliberative assembly than now exists has one great recommendation—it can be tried without the interference of the politicians. It would fall in legal classification under the head of 'Remedies by act of the parties.' In that respect it would be a method most consistent with the genius of English nations.

Ireland has in its own hands the opportunity of earning for itself the distinction

throughout the English-speaking world of being the first of those many nations to set the example of summoning a completely representative Industrial Parliament, for the purpose of frankly discussing a perplexing industrial question.

If Irish opinion as to any particular practical need of the country were to be declared, not by a mere majority of local representatives, but by a unanimity of classes fairly represented in such an assembly, after something approaching a scientific discussion—the conclusion would possess a weight resembling that of a judgment. It would come before Parliament with an irresistible force, altogether wanting to a mere popular mandate, resulting from the fortuitous processes of a general election.

With her own Industrial Parliament sitting on College Green, would not Ireland be in possession of the virtual sub-

in fact, as well as in form, an Act of the Crown ; a concession agreed upon, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled. Now Parliaments wield both the executive power and that of legislation. They attempt to be, at the same time, deliberative, legislative, and executive bodies.

Experience seems to show that these functions cannot be successfully joined ; and the deliberative function is the one of the three that suffers most. Hence the common complaint of the day—that Parliament has ceased to be a deliberative body. The deliberative is the most important stage in the process of legislation. Law—to a greater extent, even in autocratic countries, than is commonly imagined—derives its origin and its force from public opinion. Parliaments are only means of ascertaining and formulating public opinion ; and for that purpose, un-

fortunately, they have become eminently unsatisfactory. They appear to require to be supplemented by an effective deliberative body. Carlyle, writing before the day of trades' organization as it now exists, looked to the public press to perform that office of preliminary deliberation. But the press does not work by assemblies. No one can collect its suffrages; and if they could be collected, free from party influences, what representative authority would they possess? But an Industrial Parliament might be so constituted as to possess all the dignity and responsibility of a representative assembly of the nation. Political Parliaments, the formal possessors of the legislative power, would fall into their natural place; they would become little more than registrars of decrees: giving effect to conclusions arrived at in a place better fitted for calm and qualified discussion.

In constituting an Industrial Parliament the first postulate—the radical and distinctive principle—would be that the representation should be genuine, and not nominal. Every delegate should be a *bonâ fide* member of his order. For bankers the spokesmen should be bankers, lawyers should speak by lawyers, landowners by landowners, tenant farmers by tenant farmers, farm labourers by labourers, trades by tradesmen, and so throughout the list of industrial occupations and interests. The primary qualification for membership should not be glibness of tongue, but mastery of the real views and copartnership in the special interests of the respective classes. Perhaps the landlord and tenant interest in Ireland would never have got so far apart if they had met more directly ; if the one had placed its interests less in the hands of agents and the other in those of lawyers, priests, and politicians.

A second principle follows from the first.

The constituencies being classes, even when a vote was to be taken on a matter of principle, it would not be a vote by numbers but by classes. Localities of election and the quantum of representation of the constituent associations would be matters of minor importance, and should not be made the occasion of much preliminary dispute. The principle upon which the Industrial Parliament is based, that it is to be representative of classes, is to be carried into every part of its working.

So much for Constitution. In organization and procedure the same principle should be followed: wedding it at the same time to forms copied from the one part of our social constitution which, in a long experience, appears to have justly established for itself general respect and

confidence throughout the English-speaking communities. I refer to the Judiciary. Members of the legal profession are often called upon to remark the characteristic change which seems to be wrought upon the average barrister after his elevation to the Bench. The responsibilities of the position affect the very attitude and texture of his mind : and, in fact as well as in form, the former advocate becomes elevated into a judge.

Much may be due to the elevating maxims of that noble, if sometimes dishonoured, profession. But if these maxims are found to operate over an immense field, upon great numbers of men drawn from the most various origins ; if they are seen applying even to the rudest commonalties of the West (where the Bar is neither a select nor a carefully educated class, and where the dangerous principle of political election prevails) ; if over so broad a sur-

face and under such varied conditions the Bench is found justly commanding a great portion of the same respect, we must attribute a good deal of elasticity to the maxims which have that influence. We may hope that they will be found to preserve their potency when applied to a judicial committee created of able and qualified laymen, for the purpose of pronouncing an opinion upon abstract questions of an industrial or politico-economical nature. Still observing our radical principle,—of carefully excluding *mere majority* election,—the committee should be constituted by members chosen by each great group of class representatives. It would be a microcosm of the whole assembly. To it, sitting apart during the discussion, argument should be addressed, its chairman also acting as presiding officer of the body. The judicial committee could also take the opinion of specialists, or associate them for purposes

of deliberation with its own body. The results of deliberation ought to be given, like those of a great appellate body like the House of Lords, in the form of written opinions declared by each member, whether concurring, or dissenting from the opinion of the majority.

I have wished to sketch the features which seemed to me to belong to the distinguishing character of the body. Its usefulness would depend upon its being constituted as a *bonâ fide* association for industrial deliberation, and not for political agitation. It is enough that the time of Parliaments and Legislatures should be wasted on those barren fields; it is enough that individual opinions upon every question should be predetermined by reference to the party mandate, or to the *arrière pensées* of personal politics; that committees should be appointed, debates arranged, votes taken, not with any view to

the purposes of argument, but for the purpose of giving effect to the more or less foregone conclusions of a majority. Leaving all these things aside, an Industrial Parliament will be expected to make *bonâ fide* progress with the practical business of the nation.

More particularly in the excitable state of Ireland, much would depend upon the scrupulous care with which the possibility of political ends was excluded by the terms of the invitation, from whatever source the initiative proceeded. Unless the objects of the assembly were positively limited to economical investigation, unless Home Rule and other constitutional projects were declared out of order in advance, the landowners at least would not be likely to allow themselves to be drawn into what they would consider to be intended as a trap.

If any so important class were to

withhold its concurrence the deliberations of the assembly would lose their complete representative character, and, consequently, a great part of their moral weight.

I do not propose to dwell any further upon the constitution, organization, procedure, or functions of an Industrial Parliament. It would no doubt savour of presumption on my part to anticipate the work, which could be best left for development to the practical men of whom these bodies (should they ever come into existence) would naturally be composed.

Will any industrial body be bold enough to take the first experimental step?

The darkest cloud is sometimes the first to show a silver lining.

Most prominent and most influential among existing Irish associations stands the Land League. Threatening were the elements, difficult the times, out of which

that organization has struggled into its present condition. Suspicions exist that that career has not been an unspotted one. But if so, may it not be hoped, for political associations even as for individual men, that they shall rise 'from stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things?' Why may it not revert to the character of a *bonâ fide* Land League—a union of a class having common interests: excluding the elements which give it the character of an association for political agitation? The Irish people have the opportunity of exhibiting their possession of true political sagacity. Will they prefer to pursue the mere shadow of self-government, when the substance is within their grasp?

Can we not imagine the first Industrial Parliament assembling—a harbinger of peace and contentment—on College Green? There Ireland would be genu-

inely represented. There would be her manufacturers great and small: her financiers: members of the great professions: all the branches (in the future perhaps destined to be still more numerous) of her trade and commerce: her tenant farmers, and even her field labourers: lastly, but not least, that landed gentry which has furnished in the past so many leaders of men. May we not conceive what would be the closing act of the first session of that assembly of Irishmen? Having effected its organization, having tasted the pleasure of achieving valuable progress by the processes of reasoning, would it not proceed, in a unanimous burst of repentant chivalry, to wipe out the churlish and unworthy stain which recent events have left upon the fair fame of Ireland? Might we not hope to see those representatives inviting the venerable Queen, whom all nations of the world

delight in honouring, to receive the congratulations of a loyal people in one of the most beautiful of the Imperial capitals? The sound of those acclamations would ring around the globe. Across dividing oceans hearts would grow warmer at the sound. Ancient India would hear in it an assurance that the great civilization, under whose protecting shadow her war-weary peoples are finding rest, is in no danger of falling to pieces, but is only at the beginning of a long and beneficent career.

Perhaps a faint echo would penetrate even into distant Russia; suggesting to an anxious Czar and a vaguely discontented people that the first steps towards constitutional government may yet perhaps be taken, without danger of opening the sluices of revolution. A remarkable similarity exists between the position in India and that in Russia. In both countries a

great, apparently a hopeless gulf yawns between Government and people. But there would be a hope of spanning that gulf if it should be proved, by a successful experiment, that a true legislature can exist without hungering after the mere form of power. The English race, the old-time leader in the march of freedom, would have manifested that a purely deliberative assembly of the people, as a means of formulating public opinion by free discussion, is not the rival, but the natural complement of political governments; that it is *necessary* that it should be thus independently constituted, to enable it to exercise its own function free from confusing distractions and corrupting influences: which, in the experience of English Parliaments, the control of executive power always throws in the way of a legislative body.

IV.

THE writer, it will be seen, does not take a pessimistic view of the Irish question. Thickly as the clouds still lie over that vexed horizon, the light has been slowly broadening behind them. When the present troubled period is finished, it may appear that the contest in Ireland has been only a scene in the action of a greater and more cheering drama—the united progress of the English-speaking nations. In its apology for a policy of desperation the English Liberal Party (it seems to me)

* The terms English or British, in the sense in which they are here used, seems to be nearly interchangeable; a preference for the former arises from the name attaching to two of the most distinguishing features of what I term the race—its language, and its political institutions.

too frankly accuses its own past. The errors which it implies, the failure which it confesses, in the management of past Parliaments, are chiefly its own failures, its own errors. In laying that implied charge against its veteran leader, it clothes him with too great a responsibility. Great men, but particularly great orators, are seldom more than mouthpieces; they succeed in proportion as they lend language to the instincts of their time.

For a time the spirit which reigned in the British Parliament and in the Governments of its choice was a spirit of forbearance, conciliation, and patience, displayed in all the relations, internal and external, of the Empire. That spirit probably served its day. To it may be accredited the enactment of the Washington Treaty: a great deed of international charity that might well cover a multitude of minor errors. Merely from

the point of view of policy it was a great act. More than any other it unclosed the gate for the reunion, in a moral sense, of the two great peoples of the English race. That process, which ever since has been steadily progressing, has more than doubled the force of Great Britain, both for diplomatic purposes in Europe, and for dealing firmly with home troubles.

The same conciliatory tendency inspired the earnest efforts of recent Parliaments to do full, if tardy, justice to the long-neglected complaints of Ireland; and they were productive of similar although even less calculated results. Whatever may be thought of the actual statesmanship of those measures, or of their consistency with sound principles of political economy, however even they may have fallen short of success in their local and immediate object, yet they are not to be regretted.

In one respect they have been fully worth all they have cost.

That those measures have contributed indirectly to confirm that reconciliation with the American people which the Washington Treaty began, is the testimony of an observer whose acquaintance with American sentiment dates back to the times before Disestablishment and the Irish land legislation. England's efforts at conciliating Ireland, although they have been unsuccessful with the sister to whom they were addressed, have, like the courtship of one of the characters in the story of *Middlemarch*, unconsciously produced a happy result in another direction. The cultivated part at least of the American people (to be distinguished, of course, from American politicians and their press) now recognise that if the Irish Question is still unsettled it is not so much for want of a spirit of justice on the part of

the British Parliament, as on account of inherent difficulties in the problem. If misinformation still leads to misdirected sympathy, the sympathy is no longer acute. There is not now an interest felt like that of onlookers at a game having their stakes all on one side. There is simply the attention of listeners at a serious and probably prolonged debate.

Events have given to that debate a more hopeful turn than might have been expected.

Beholding Mr. Gladstone becoming the apologist of Nationalism must have been as startling as an apparition to some of that statesman's supporters.

Nothing could have appeared more retrograde, more like a violation of all consistency on the part of a veteran Liberal, than to lend the high authority of his name and the great powers of his eloquence to so reactionary a task as that of reviving into activity in a great Western Empire, at

this date of the world's enlightenment, the ancient antipathies of race and the selfish jealousies of local nationality : baneful and misanthropic passions that might better have been left to flourish in the congenial soil of the East of Europe. History, it may be thought, will find it hard to forgive what must appear as a sin against the very spirit of modern civilisation. Nevertheless, an important gain is due to that very act of Mr. Gladstone. A secret and smouldering local passion has been brought into the open field and made the subject of Constitutional debate. The reason of the whole modern world is made the judge of the merits.

In initiating the debate, Mr. Gladstone may prove to have chosen the wrong, and, therefore, the weaker side of the issue. If the cause of Irish Nationalism is against the cause of civilisation, the eloquence of a single man cannot avail to maintain it.

But in the effort to conciliate that judgment the claims of Irish independence must be fairly argued, not with mere barbaric bitterness, but if possible upon broad and reasonable grounds.

When an orator like Mr. Davitt declares that he has registered a vow of eternal hatred against England and the English Government, and invites his hearers, a crowd of Irish peasants, to do the same, he forgets to what public opinion his cause is now addressing itself. In the time of Hannibal vows of eternal hatred may have been applauded, but in the nineteenth century of Christian civilisation the wickedness of such a sentiment is to a considerable degree relieved by its absurdity. In submitting the merits of its cause to the judgment of the English race, with such advocates, Nationalism is in danger of earning condemnation upon the face of its pleas.

Home Rule rhetoric, it seems to me, is already developing its own *reductio ad absurdum*. Its most eminent English advocate intimated that the 'Irish nation' was justified in refusing to accept even beneficial measures if offered to it by the Imperial instead of by a local 'National' legislature. From the other side of the Channel the same text, as was to be expected, has been expanded by a more pointed commentary. An argument quite openly used in the 'National' press for the encouragement of habits of general lawlessness and disorder, for the perjury of jurors, and the general suppression of justice, is, that the laws broken were not laws declared by local authority or put into execution by the appointees of a local administration.

The people of the United States had some experience of the same doctrine during what was called the Reconstruction

Period, after the Civil War, when local and party feeling ran very high. The independent press invented a term to describe the practice. They called it 'Mexicanisation.' By Mexicanisation of American politics they meant the adoption of the habit of mind prevailing in Mexico, of regarding the laws and Government as entitled to no obedience when administered by an opposite faction: a habit of mind which in the unhappy country of its origin maintained a perpetual state of social disorganization and private misery.

When, therefore, it was perceived that party spirit in its bitterness was beginning to teach, in the press and on the platform, the doctrine that a local majority ought not to submit to laws made against its will by the general majority—as it is now being taught in Ireland—American common sense soon revolted. It decisively declared itself in favour of the

‘American’ system—as it termed it—of submitting with patience to the will of the lawful majority, however distasteful its decisions, until they can be removed in a constitutional manner by the influence of reason upon the minds of a majority of the whole body of electors under the existing Constitution.

What the American press termed ‘the American principle’ is simply the fundamental English principle of citizenship under a free government, inherited by the Americans from the mother country. In the course of a generation that principle has prevailed over the bitterness of the local majorities in the Southern and in the Northern States respectively. So may we hope to see it ultimately accomplish a similar victory over the bitterness of the local majority in Ireland. To use such influence as it may to promote that state of mind rather than the contrary

must in the end appear to the American people (vitaly interested as it is in the support of the principles of popular government) as a duty not any longer to be evaded.

However, therefore, we may believe that the Home Rule proposal, if it had been carried out, would have had a most pernicious success, we may yet admit that the act of the Liberal Party of Great Britain in bringing forward that Parliamentary measure promises to become incidentally of signal advantage. When that great party offered itself as the vessel of Irish Nationalism, for the poison concealed in the wine there existed, fortunately, a neutralising virtue in the very cup that was extended to receive it. In the endeavour of the two Parties to unite, while an English Party has been learning the theory of Nationalism, at the same time the Irish Party, in spite of itself,

has been commencing the practice of Imperialism. An Irish leader of ability no longer sees himself in a position of galling isolation ; his criticisms unvalued, his measures pooh-poohed, his complaints on behalf of his constituency habitually treated with indifference. Now such men are finding themselves promoted—apparently not unwillingly—from leadership in a local faction into a joint share in the leadership of one of the great British Parties. The rank and file also are feeling the touch of a larger fellowship. They are learning to seek for arguments that will commend themselves to Englishmen and Scotchmen, and to shape the conduct of their cause in a manner to strengthen their allies and conciliate opinion on the other side of the Irish Channel. The practice has only begun, but already, I think, the results are auspicious.

Once the Land quarrel—that unfortunate dividing-line of local parties—has been removed by any means from the category, native advocacy will cease to be found monopolised by one side of any question. Castle Government (if still necessary to be preserved), must in due course be shorn of its exasperating features. The time cannot be distant, however they may now repudiate the prospect, when Irish members of an incoming party will be found looking forward to the Irish Secretaryship as their share of the honours of success.

Let Irish national enthusiasm have its due honour. Through centuries of disfavour and oppression, the reed so often bruised has never broken. That intense local patriotism of the Irish is far from justifying despair. It is only the symptom of a capacity for an impassioned and ideal loyalty which may yet make Ireland—instead of a stumbling-block—a corner-

stone in the stately Imperial structure of the future.

Patriotism contains a purely practical element, traceable to the instinct of self-interest. In one sense it is but another name for public spirit, the perception of common interests which can be best served by community of action. But the emotion of patriotism is an element that transcends its origin. Springing from the practical, it rises towards the ideal. The passion which has so often in the world's history inspired not only to deeds of bravery, but to acts of sublime self-sacrifice: which, on a larger or smaller scale, has awakened masses of men to the sympathies of brotherhood, really partakes of the nature of religion. Such a passion has in itself a principle of vitality which calls on it to progress, changing its form and developing its substance towards higher things. Even a religion, if it is living,

is not stationary. The sympathies and conscience of man grow along with his intellect.

From the parish and the clan to the nation and the race, the human spirit gropes its way under an unseen instinct towards the greater enthusiasm of humanity, the ultimate and only satisfying ideal. Each step in the development is a schoolmaster that brings us to the next. The philanthropy of patriotism retains a spice of misanthropy. Too often is it narrow, jealous, and even vindictive. It is a tribal patriotism, addressing its *Te Deums* to a tribal God. It rejoices over the evil which the people of rival nations suffer. But the progress of moral education goes on: the less perfect gives way in time to the more perfect.

More particularly in the English-speaking world, Destiny has been tending to develop a larger, a more liberal, and

magnanimous sentiment of nationality than the world has ever before seen. Each of the two great communities into which our race is now divided politically, may be said to be a people composed of many nations. Patriotism in such a people must be a principle rather than a passion. It seeks justification in the inheritance of noble institutions and of a useful past, and in the conscious momentum towards similar and greater moral objects in the future. That momentum in the English race is certainly not towards a world divided against itself; towards a series of petty nationalities, surrounding themselves with cut-throat tariffs and bristling with internecine armaments. Reason and Sentiment, walking hand in hand, are jointly guiding the English race towards a very different ideal. Industrial Brotherhood is the banner which both halves of the sundered race are carrying, and under which

they are ultimately destined to find themselves morally united. What the Land question does to create division between Ireland and her sister-country the Tariff question does between Great Britain and the United States and the Colonies, and likewise between those other communities of the race among themselves. The removal of such barriers will not be hastened by the hand of demagogic legislatures, or by the guarded processes of diplomacy. The tendency of the times is towards great industrial conferences, in which these problems will be examined by more qualified representatives, free to engage in a franker discussion. Should the experiment of national industrial Parliaments be undertaken and prove successful, those local assemblies would lead by a very easy gradation, at least to occasional international assemblies, upon the same foundation. Such great assemblies would, pro-

bably, make better practical progress by being homogeneous—and representations drawn from the widely-planted British race ought to be sufficiently representative of the diversities of the globe.

It may yet be discovered as the result of such a conference that the question of the Tariff cannot be fairly examined except in connexion with that other great problem of the times, the Currency. It may be made manifest that the two are closely interdependent. Tariffs, it is possible, only redress the inequalities (or, perhaps, minimise—by localising—the operation) of shifting standards of settlement between debtor and creditor nations. Thus, agreement upon a common English standard of value may ultimately be destined to be the forerunner of a mutual abolition of hostile tariffs. Of one thing we can be certain: Whenever the English race unites upon a policy, whether military, economic, or

moral, it will be able to enforce its resolves upon the rest of the world.*

The instinctive movement of the English race is not towards a truculent greatness—the embodiment of a merely selfish ideal—but towards its own moral union and to the unity and greatness of its two great parts as favouring the peace and advancement of mankind. Before such an ideal may not enthusiasm well rise, even to the height of a religion? In the white-heat of that enthusiasm, shall not all merely provincial patriotisms, all enthusiasms less worthy of the race, yield themselves up?

* So much that I had prepared to say upon the subject of the influence of a fluctuating currency upon trade depressions—that great obstacle to the well-being of the masses—has been so fully and precisely anticipated by Professor Alfred Marshall (*Contemporary Review*, March 1887), that I take the liberty of referring to his article instead of dwelling upon the subject at length.

The question which is being presented to the Irish people is, On which side will they place themselves? Shall they fall in with the progress of the great race to which they belong, or will they oppose it?

Before the sacred taper of their patriotism the Irish have watched through a long and lonely night of suffering. But now the taper pales. There is the broadening of a better day. Has not the time come for the Irish to arise from their wayside shrine? Will they not join the march of the majestic procession moving towards the nobler temple of Humanity?

THE END.

LONDON:

Printed by STRANGEWAYS & SONS, Tower Street, Cambridge Circus.

